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Fifty-seventh session
Agenda items 6, 9 and 11

**RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD**

**CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS**

**Letter dated 30 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

During this fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, the Chinese delegation noticed that some non-governmental organizations have distributed documents related to the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China and have made groundless accusations against the Chinese Government.

In order to clarify the matter, I am forwarding to you herewith the position paper* of the Chinese Government on the Tibetan Autonomous Region and request that it be circulated as an official document under agenda items 6, 9 and 11 of the current session of the Commission.

(Signed): QIAO Zonghuai
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reproduced as received, in Chinese and English only.

Annex

## The Position Paper of the Chinese Government on Tibet

Tibet is an inalienable part of China. From the 13th Century up until now, the Chinese government has been exercising effective jurisdiction over Tibet for more than 700 years. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially after the Democratic Reform and the abolition of serfdom in this region, world-shaking changes have occurred in social development and human rights situation in Tibet.

### I. Guaranteeing Civil and Political Rights

People of the Tibet Autonomous Region enjoy all rights of citizens and political rights as stated in the Constitution and are entitled to all special rights of regional autonomy of ethnic minorities.

Tibet practices regional autonomy in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. At the provincial level, the Tibet Autonomous Region not only enjoys the right to formulate local regulations, but is entitled to make decisions on local affairs and promulgate regulations governing the exercise of autonomy and specific issues, in accordance with local political, economic and cultural characteristics. In Tibet, all citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and to stand for election. In the present National People's Congress, 20 deputies come from the Tibet Autonomous Region, 80 percent of whom are of Tibetan nationality and other ethnic minorities.

The religious freedom of the Tibetan people is respected and protected, the Tibetan people now enjoy full freedom to participate in normal religious activities. Almost every religious family has a small sutra recitation hall or a niche for a Buddhist statue. More than 1 million worshipers make the pilgrimage to Lhasa each year. In recent years, the Chinese central government has allocated a huge sum of capital and large quantities of materials such as gold and silver for the repair and maintenance of Tibet's lamaseries. For the renovation of the Potala Palace alone, the central government allotted more than 55 million yuan (US$9.63 million) during a five-year period, the largest and most expensive renovation project for the palace in hundreds of years. To date, more than

1,400 religious centers have been renovated and opened to the public, meeting the needs of the religious people for their normal religious life.

The Tibetan nationality's freedom to use and develop their own language has been effectively protected, and Tibetan is the common language of the entire autonomous region. Today, all laws, regulations, regulations and decrees adopted by the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region and all formal documents and notices issued by the autonomous regional government are promulgated in both Tibetan and Chinese. Speakers of different languages are treated equally in the recruitment of workers, cadres and students, with priority given to Tibetans.

## II. Improvement of Economic, social and Cultural Rights

Since the implementation of the Democratic Reform, the Tibetan people, with the support of the central government and people all over China, have been making every effort to develop their economic, social and cultural lives. Tibet has witnessed fundamental changes in its overall social outlook while the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the Tibetan people has been substantially improved.

The central government has always instituted preferential policies to encourage Tibet's social and economic development. It has allocated large sums of capital and provided support in technology and professionals. In the past few years, the central government has allocated over 1.2 billion yuan (US$144 million) in financial subsidies to Tibet each year. The per capita disposable income of urban residents in Tibet is higher than the country's average, the basic need of food and clothing of the majority of farmers and herdsmen has been met.

The living standard of the Tibetan people has been greatly improved now. The Tibetan population has increased rapidly. To date, the total population in Tibet is more than 2.4 million, more than double the figure of 1 million in 1950. The population of Tibetans has made up of more than 95 percent of the total population in Tibet. In recent years, the birth rate and natural population growth rate of the region are respectively much higher than the national average.

## III. Benefit from the Strategy of Western Development

The Chinese Government has decided to develop west China in an unprecedented large scale, shifting the focus of economic construction from the eastern parts of the country to the west in order to narrow the gap. This strategic adjustment aims to build the vast, remote western region into a beautiful land, where people live in harmony with nature, by providing enormous investments and policy guidance.

This strategy will have a historic influence to the western region, including Tibet. The huge investment by the central government will speed up the development of basic industries and infrastructures, science and technology, education and culture in the western region, and will improve the ecology and environment there. With a view to implement the strategy, the central government will accelerate the construction of water conservancy projects, transportation networks and communications facilities, as well as the highways and railways to smooth the transportation between the provinces in the region and link the region with other parts of the country. New airports and natural gas pipeline projects will also be built. These projects will give Tibet a golden opportunity to promote its economic and social development, and will also help the Tibetans to improve their living standard. On the other hand, the implementation of the strategy of Western Development will be conducive to strengthen the connection between the central government and the local governments, eastern region and western region, the Han nationality and minority nationalities, including Tibetan nationality. It will also be conducive to the common prosperity and development of all nations of China.

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